



QUESTIONS FOR DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES AND PUBLIC PROTECTION (DESPP) COMMISSIONER

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DESPP

DESPP consists of (1) the divisions of Emergency Management and Homeland Security, State Police, Statewide Emergency Telecommunications, and Scientific Services; (2) Police Officer Standards and Training Council; and (3) Fire Prevention and Control Commission.

The DESPP commissioner is the administrative and commanding head of the State Police and has all the powers and privileges of a police officer.

Among other things, the commissioner appoints resident state troopers; licenses professional bondsmen and private detectives, among others; and enforces commercial vehicle laws at weigh stations.

QUESTIONS FOR NOMINEE

1. Recent OFA and OPM analyses estimate that DESPP is likely to exceed its budget by \$3.5 million in FY 15.

What steps are you taking to manage the budget and ensure that there will be no deficiency in FY 15 or future years?

2. Given the current budget forecast, in what areas do you think the State Police and other law enforcement entities, including local police, can collaborate to cut costs and increase efficiency without compromising public safety?
3. How would you compare your experience working with the union in the New York City prison system with that of working with the State Police union?
4. How is the agency coping with the demands placed on it by the gun legislation passed in 2013?

5. After you reviewed the dispatch consolidation process, you decided not to consolidate the central region dispatch operations.

What factors did you consider in making the decision? Can you please detail the current state of dispatch consolidation, and explain why consolidation appears to be viable in the east and west districts but not the central region?

6. Recent reports from the department indicate that the State Police is overspending its budget on motor vehicle fuel.

How do you explain this in light of declining oil prices? Do you believe it is related to the off-duty use of police vehicles? Even if this is not the case, do you believe it is time to revisit the issue of the off-duty use of police vehicles?

7. What steps are you taking to reduce State Police use of overtime?

8. Some people say that a racially and ethnically diverse police force can improve relations between police and residents. A bill before the legislature (HB 6304) would require police departments to make a "good faith" effort to maintain a force that reflects the gender and racial diversity of the population served by the police force.

What do you think of this proposal? What would you consider a good faith effort? How would you rate current State Police practices in this area?

9. Under what circumstances would you support the creation of an independent oversight body to monitor and review State Police policies and practices? What should be the limits of its power?

10. Last December, President Obama established the *Task Force on 21st Century Policing* to strengthen community policing and trust among law enforcement officers and the communities they serve. The task force will be seeking input from state and other officials (see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/18/fact-sheet-task-force-21st-century-policing>).

Will DESPP be participating in this task force? Drawing on your corrections and law enforcement experience, what suggestions would you make to this task force?

11. In 2014, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) conducted an investigation into potential civil rights violations in the handling of teenage inmates at the Rikers Island prison in New York. As part of its investigation, DOJ requested audits or reviews related to violence by staff against adolescent inmates or between inmates. The *New York Times* has alleged that you deliberately removed information damaging to the then warden and his deputy. Some

media reports have gone as far as to suggest that you “sanitized” the reports and may have participated in a cover-up. In a public response, you indicated that you corrected statistics and deleted confidential disciplinary information.

How do you respond to the allegations?

12. In the wake of the Missouri grand jury’s decision not to indict the police officer involved in the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown, the Obama administration proposed a three-year \$263 million package on community policing, including a 50 percent match for state and local police departments that purchase body cameras, for a total of \$75 million to buy 50,000 cameras (see <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/12/01/fact-sheet-strengthening-community-policing>).
13. Is the State Police currently using or considering the use of body cameras? What do you see as potential benefits or problems to equipping officers with cameras?

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